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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/585,068	06/07/2007	Maurizio Boiocchi	07040.0265-00000	7932
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FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413				
EXAMINER				
FISCHER, JUSTIN R				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1747				
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12/02/2010		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/585,068

Applicant(s)

BOIOCCHI ET AL.

Examiner

Justin R. Fischer

Art Unit

1747

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 November 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 35-68 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 35-68 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/226)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 122909
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 24, 2010 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 35-41, 56-58, 60, and 61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ohashi (JP 02249707, of record).

As best depicted in Figure 3, Ohashi teaches a pneumatic tire construction including a tread, wherein said tread is formed of a central component 2 (first elastomeric material) and an additional component 3 (second elastomeric material) having a groove define therein. More particularly, Ohashi includes an inventive example (designated as E1 by applicant in Table 3 of declaration) having a compressive modulus and IRHD hardness relationship that satisfies the claimed ranges. It is emphasized that independent of the vulcanization parameters (UHP or non UHP), the

IRD hardness ratio is lower than "about" 1.10 and the compressive modulus ratio is not lower than "about" 1.30.

As to claim 37, the first elastomeric material (B) has a compressive modulus of 5.67 MPa or 5.47 MPa, each of which falls within the claimed range between "about" 4 MPa and "about" 8 MPa (see Table 2 in applicant's declaration).

Regarding claim 38, the second material (C) has a compressive modulus of 6.98 MPa or 7.06 MPa, each of which falls within the claimed range between "about" 6 MPa and "about" 12 MPa.

With respect to claim 39, the ratios listed in Table 3 of applicant's declaration are seen to be "about" 1.05.

As to claims 40 and 41, each of the first and second materials (B and C) has an IRHD hardness between "about" 50 and "about" 70.

As to claims 56, 60, and 61, Figure 3 clearly depicts a plurality of grooves. With specific respect to claim 61, the claims do not require first and second sectors and as such, a plurality of first sectors including grooves can be arbitrarily selected.

With respect to claim 57, the second elastomeric material 3 is shaped in a way so as to form a lining surrounding said at least one groove.

Regarding claim 58, the second material of Ohashi has a thickness between 0.3 and 10 mm, which fully incorporates the claimed range.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

5. Claims 42-46 and 50-55 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohashi and further in view of Takaki (US 5,006,603, of record).

Ohashi includes a second elastomeric material having a high modulus in the groove sections of the tread in order to provide improved wear/abrasion resistance. While the reference fails to expressly disclose how an increased modulus and resistance is achieved, it is well known to include fibrillated fibers of polyamide in tire tread compositions to provide the aforementioned benefits, as shown for example by Takaki (Abstract and Column 6, Lines 31-68). Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to include polyamide fibers in the second elastomeric material of Ohashi to obtain the desired modulus and abrasion resistance. In such an instance, Takaki specifically teaches the desire to improve mechanical properties and abrasion resistance without a corresponding increase in Mooney viscosity (Column 6, Lines 31+). As such, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have expected the respective compositions (first and second elastomeric materials) to have a viscosity relationship outside the broad range of the claimed invention. Additionally, the absolute values defined in claims 43 and 44 are consistent with those commonly associated with tire compositions, as shown for example by Takaki (Column 18, Lines 10+). Lastly, it is noted that claims 43 and 44 include relative language and thus fail to define over the tread design of Ohashi in view of Takaki.

As to claim 46, the base components of the first and second elastomeric materials would be expected to be similar (e.g., SBR, synthetic polyisoprene). More

particularly, the respective components can be viewed as having "substantially" the same mechanical properties.

Regarding claims 50 and 51, Takaki suggests the inclusion of between 1 and 100 phr of short polyamide fibers.

With respect to claims 52-55, it is well known to include carbon black and/or silica in tire rubber compositions and one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have readily appreciated the use of either or both reinforcing filler in the composition of Ohashi. It is further noted that Takaki even recognizes the known inclusion of polyamide fibers with each of the disclosed reinforcing fillers (Column 15, Lines 1+).

6. Claims 47-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohashi as applied in claim 35 above and further in view of Larson (US 6,598,645, of record).

As detailed above, Ohashi includes a second elastomeric material having a high modulus in the groove sections of the tread in order to provide improved wear/abrasion resistance. While the reference fails to expressly disclose how an increased modulus and resistance is achieved, it is well known to include intercalated clay (layered inorganic materials) in elastomeric compositions to provide the aforementioned benefits, as shown for example by Larson (Abstract, Column 2, and Column 4) .

In this instance, Larson suggests the inclusion of intercalated organoclays that are at least partially exfoliated in situ, wherein the exfoliated platelets have a thickness of about 1 nm and the particles of the stacked platelets have a thickness between 10

and 40 nm. As such, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to include such an inorganic reinforcement in the tread of Ohashi. It is emphasized that tire compositions are generally described as including a wide variety of known reinforcing fillers, including carbon black, silica, and additional inorganic fillers- absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to include such a known reinforcing filler in the tread of Ohashi. Lastly, a fair reading of Larson would have generally suggested the inclusion of such an inorganic filler in tire compositions.

7. Claims 35, 59, 62-68 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukuda (JP 53080602) and Ohashi.

As best depicted in Figure 2, Fukuda teaches a pneumatic tire construction having a tread formed of a first elastomeric material 5 and a second elastomeric material 6, wherein said second elastomeric material is included in a groove section of the tread. The reference further teaches that the second elastomeric material provides higher wear resistance than the first elastomeric material. While the reference fails to expressly disclose the claimed modulus and hardness relationship, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have recognized such a disclosure as teaching a higher modulus and hardness for the second elastomeric material. Ohashi provides one example of a similar tire design in which a rubber composition having a higher modulus (and thus a higher hardness) is used in combination with a first elastomeric material in order to, among other things, provide improved wear/abrasion resistance. Furthermore, an inventive example of Ohashi satisfies each of the claimed

ratios as detailed in the previous paragraphs. Absent any conclusive showing of unexpected results, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to use first and second elastomeric materials satisfying the claimed invention.

As to claim 59, the tread of Fukuda includes a plurality of first sectors 6 and a plurality of second sectors 5.

Regarding claim 62, said first sectors extend over the entire thickness of the tread.

As to claims 63-65, whether or not the base portions of the second elastomeric material are connected to one another (and thus define an "additional layer") does not appear to be critical to the inventive concept of Fukuda. It is emphasized that the primary concern of Fukuda is in the inclusion of a second elastomeric material in the vicinity of the groove sections in order to improve wear/abrasion resistance. One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have readily appreciated an arrangement in which the base portions of respective first sectors are connected to one another. In this instance, applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed thickness of the connecting portion. Lastly, it is emphasized that tread/cap and similar multi-layered tread designs are commonly formed with a wide variety of arrangements, including ones in which a ground contacting rubber is connected within the tire to define an underlayer.

With respect to claim 66, said first sector has a width greater than a width of the groove.

As to claim 67, the figures generally depict the first sectors as having a slightly greater width than the corresponding grooves- such a depiction appears to be consistent with the broad range of the claimed invention (difference of between 4-10 mm) and applicant has not provided a conclusive showing of unexpected results to establish a criticality for the claimed arrangement.

Regarding claim 68, the grooves have a depth that extends beyond the meridian plane of the first sectors.

Response to Amendment

8. The declaration under 37 CFR 1.132 filed November 24, 2010 is insufficient to overcome the rejection of claims 35-68 based upon Ohashi as set forth in the last Office action because: said declaration suggests that an inventive example of Ohashi demonstrates a hardness ratio and a modulus ratio in accordance to the claimed invention (in light of the language "about").

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed November 24, 2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments are almost entirely directed to the declaration submitted on November 24, 2010. As detailed above, said declaration suggests that an inventive example of Ohashi demonstrates a hardness ratio and a modulus ratio in accordance to the claimed invention (in light of the language "about"). It is emphasized that such ratios are independent of the vulcanization parameters (UHP or non-UHP). It is suggested that applicant remove the language "about" from the ranges to overcome the rejection in view of Ohashi. While Ohashi is directed to a tire

construction including first and second materials having different modulus and hardness values, one would not have found it obvious to specifically select a pair of compositions satisfying a modulus ratio greater than 1.30 and a hardness ratio less than 1.10.

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Justin R. Fischer** whose telephone number is **(571) 272-1215**. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on (571) 272-1226. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Justin Fischer
/Justin R Fischer/

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Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1747

November 30, 2010